

THE FORT HOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWSLETTER

April 13, 2012



FORT HOOD IS STILL "THE GREAT PLACE" "THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY BEGINS AT FORT HOOD"

The information contained in this newsletter is researched and provided by the Fort Hood Customer Service Officer, a Management Analyst of the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, a Special Staff to the Garrison Commander.

What is Customer Service?

What is Customer Service and why is it so hard to define? When asked to define Customer Service most people get a puzzled, glazed look about them. You can't define it, they'll say. Or when pushed, they'll mutter something about being treated like you want to be treated or it's when you're made to feel at home. Somehow those are not very satisfying definitions.

Does Customer Service defy definition because it is so warm and fuzzy that it must be experienced rather than quantified? Asked another way, is Customer Service purely subjective and exists only in the eyes of the beholder or is it objective and exist independently of the person?

Whatever it is, most people will say they know it when they see it or experience it. Customer service, whether good or bad, exists whenever there is customer contact or a "moment of truth."

We know it when we go into a department store and get ignored. We feel it when we go to a restaurant and the staff's priority is with each other and not their customers. We sense it when we go into a governmental office to ask a question and there is a numbness in answers. But all these are examples of what customer service is NOT, not what it IS.

First, look at the two words: **Customer** and **Service**. When the two come together there are two possible outcomes:

- they can form a collision that will leave the customer frustrated and angry or
- it can be a comfortable joining together of two friends that leave the customer satisfied and pleased.

The company is either in synch or out of synch with their customer. Let me offer one definition:

Customer Service is any contact, whether active or passive, between a customer and a company that causes a negative or positive perception by a customer.

The perception will be influenced to be either positive or negative by the customer's expectations of the contact having been met, exceeded or disappointed. Unfortunately Customer Service is so rare nowadays that it could be a tremendous competitive advantage for any company willing to understand and develop the tools necessary to unleash it. It is amazing that it is utilized so little when the effects are so remarkable.

A second, more service oriented definition of Customer Service is that it must be rampant throughout the organization, starting at the top, rewarded and recognized, admired and emulated and must be sustained by being ingrained into the fabric of the company. That definition reads like a mission statement. When you think about it, maybe it should.

By Doctor John T. Self

A Riddle: How One Bad Employee Can Affect Many

One of the great riddles of Western Civilization is the impact that one bad employee can have on good employees. This one bad employee can lower the standards of good employees to the extent that an entire department can suffer.

What makes this doubly puzzling is that the reverse does not seem to be true. Good employees rarely can elevate a bad employee. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, "How is it that so few can do so much to so many?"

What to do, what to do.

A great man once said that it is not the people that you fire who are a problem, it is the employees who **should be fired**, but aren't, that are the problem. Think about these points:

- Do you find yourself grumbling every day about a particular employee that just exudes an attitude of not caring?
- Are there some employees that never get motivated no matter what threat or incentive is offered?

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- Do you have a certain employee that "gets by" somehow by doing the minimum amount of effort each day and your employees know it?
- Do you find yourself apologizing for a particular employee that you know is not putting out anywhere close to the same effort that the other employees are trying to do?

Why are they still employed with you? No answer?

The answer is that in today's environment it is extremely difficult to terminate someone. It takes an incredible amount of paperwork, time and effort.

However, I can tell you it is a certainty that it's worth the time and effort to do the paperwork. Your work in elevating the standards of customer service will be greatly diminished by having this person(s) stay in your employment.

Keeping the weak links makes it appear like you are only talking the talk and not walking the walk. Your employees know. It is only human nature that if the boss doesn't care, then it is very tempting to not care. Even good employees with very high personal standards will start to relax those standards if bad employees and good employees are treated the same.

The termination step is drastic and should certainly be the last resort. Everyone deserves a chance to do well. After all, people in your employment started off wanting to do a great job for you and for themselves. Was their downward trend partly your fault by ignoring them or having low standards?

Take the first step: talk to your human resources department, your boss or yourself and make sure that you know how to document the path for terminating a recalcitrant employee. Your customers and your employees will thank you.

Source: Improving Customer Service Series

What Attitude?

Employee attitudes can be very complicated and difficult to fully comprehend. In order to get an understanding of a particular type of attitude, a short story about another 'employee' will help us put things into perspective.

There was a man who decided to become a monk. He joined a very strict group whose members were permitted to say only two words every ten years. After ten years he was called in to say his two words. The monk said: "Food bad." The monks looked at each other, thanked him for his insight and sent him off.

Ten years passed and once again the monk was called in to say his two words. This time he responded: "Bed hard." The monks looked at each other, thanked him and sent him off.

After ten more years, the monk was once again called in to say his two words. This time he said simply: "I quit." The monks said they really weren't surprised; after all, he'd had a bad attitude for 30 years.

Not only is this an enjoyable tale, but there really is a message here. To get to the heart of that message, ask yourself the following questions:

- How many of your employees have bad attitudes right now? Are you sure?
- Do you just accept that some of your employees have bad attitudes? Do you even care?
- Are you afraid to find out why they have bad attitudes?

If you answered that you would rather not know about bad attitudes, you probably feel that they are no big deal. As long as your employees do their job adequately, where is the real harm?

The problem is that your employees may well respond just like those customers that are not treated well but don't complain. While they may not complain to you directly, they most definitely complain to anyone who will listen--colleagues, even customers. While management sticks their head in the sand, the customer stew, broods, gets frustrated and feels alienated. The same is true with your employees. They are affecting themselves, their peers and, in the end, you and your business.

It is equally as bad when you are aware of attitude problems but don't do anything about them. There are many managers that would much prefer to be busy anywhere other than where there is a possible confrontation with a

customer or employee. They think that if they ignore the problem it will just go away. They are both right and wrong.

They are wrong in the sense that the problem will NOT just go away. They are right in that the problem WILL just go away, but it will carry the customer and the employee with it--as in quit, terminate, leave and never come back.

It will always be in your best interest to be the first to sniff out a bad attitude problem. Chances are it is something you can clear up immediately once you've identified the problem. Usually the underlying bad attitude stems from a management oversight that, if left alone, could fester and grow out of proportion till eventually the employee quits. A typical example would be when an employee gets a pay raise but it doesn't appear on the following check. This is easy to clear up ONLY if you know about it--only if you ask. Don't lose employees because you're sticking your head in the sand. Take a deep breath and get to the bottom of it. You'll feel better and both you and your employees will benefit. That's a promise.

By Doctor John T. Self



**Are you communicating with
your customers?**



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Customer Service at its finest.....

How would you feel if the employee pictured above worked for you? (Maybe she does, but let's hope not!) Would you want someone with that attitude representing your organization to your customers?

When it comes to any service business, one of your most important assets are your front-line employees. Those employees who are constantly interacting with your guests and campers. They are the guys and gals who will make, or break your business.

So, are your front-line employees helping you grow your camp/conference center or putting you out of business?



"I've decided to have myself frozen until science discovers a cure for bad customer service."



"The bad news is, our customers hate us. The good news is, we have a lot fewer customers than we used to!"



THE GOOD NEWS IS, WE'VE GOT 100 PERCENT LESS COMPLAINTS. THE BAD NEWS IS, WE'VE LOST ALL OUR CUSTOMERS.



"This call may be monitored for quality purposes. For starters, we don't like the way you tap your fingers when you get impatient."

While providing customer service, what side does your customers see, the "sweet side" or the "dark side"?



"I'm looking for a job in customer service. So, I'm distributing my resume."

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Did you know???

The Chaplain's Office now has 19 separate service provider accounts on ICE, to allow for customers to submit their feedback to the appropriate service area or function within the new Chapel Complex. The new services are as follows:

Catholic Services
Contemporary Protestant Services
Gospel Protestant Services
Traditional Protestant Services
Liturgical Protestant Services
Jewish Services
Muslim Services
Wiccan Services
Catholic Religious Education Programs
Protestant High School Youth (Bob's Diner)
Protestant Middle School Youth (Bob's Diner)
Protestant Creative Arts (Bob's Diner)
Catholic Youth (Crusaders)
Gospel Youth
Community Connections
Crisis Line Chaplain
Spiritual Fitness Center Programs
Chapel Facility Issues
Garrison Chaplain's Office

Should you have any questions, concerns or positive feedback regarding services offered at the Chapel Complex, feel free to submit an ICE Comment card or contact Chelsey Rumgay (Chapel Secretary) at 254-288-6545. Additional information can be found by visiting the Fort Hood Chaplain Home Page at: <http://www.hood.army.mil/CHAPLAIN/>

Make Your Customers Feel Like a VIP!

Everyone deserves to receive world-class service.

Consider yourself as an employee in the hotel business, where you are usually the person assigned to serve the VIP guests. Whether a server or a concierge, your managers trusted you to provide exceptional customer service to the CEO's, celebrities, and royalty that would visit.

In your manager's minds, those guests needed "extra special service".

While you were flattered that your managers thought so highly of your customer service skills, you are bothered by their assertion that some guests should get "better" treatment than others.

In your mind, all of your guests were VIP's. You truly never made a distinction between how you served the supposed VIP's and every other guest you had. In your heart, you felt that EVERYONE deserved excellent service, regardless of their socioeconomic status, job title, or any other label. For you, serving the Queen of England is just as honorable as serving Joe Smith, who is on vacation with his family of four.

First Class vs. Coach

As many of you may know, one of the perks of travelling often is being upgraded to the first-class cabin. While it's enjoyable in the larger seats and additional amenities, there is one thing that's annoying: those people are often treated much nicer by the flight attendants in first-class, than when in coach. It's like a completely different service experience, although on the same plane.

A company that is truly striving to build a "world-class" service culture will make every effort to develop service standards that emphasize exceptional service for EVERY customer, all the time. Now, this does not mean that every customer should get the same service. True service excellence requires personalization and making each customer feel as though there is no one else, at that moment, more important than him or her. Using customer's names and learning their preferences are two ways to accomplish personalized service.

Service is not about what you want to give

I have witnessed many occasions when someone tried to be engaging, but ended up annoying and disengaging the customer. For example, wrestling a suitcase from a guest who would rather carry it herself is annoying. Insisting on escorting a customer, when he

has already declined your offer is annoying. Trying to establish an engaging dialogue, when it's clear that the customer would rather be left alone is annoying. Service is not about what you want to give, it is about what the other person wants to receive.

Give "insider" tips

One of the best ways to make your customers feel like a VIP is by giving them insider information. In other words, making your customers feel like they are privy to valuable information that is not widely known (or at least they may perceive that the information is not widely known). For example, Enterprise Rent-a-Car has a service called, We'll pick you up. This basically means that the Enterprise location, where you are renting the car, can send a shuttle to pick you up from wherever you are (home, office, etc.) and bring you back to their branch to rent the car. I recently saw an employee tell a customer about that service and the customer was incredibly impressed. The customer commented that he thought that such service was only reserved for their big-shot clients.

At a recent trip to the CVS Pharmacy in our neighborhood, an employee saw a shopper looking at canned salmon (yes, CVS sells grocery items too). The employee proactively approached the shopper and told him that the salmon was half price, even though the displayed price did not reflect the reduced price. The employee explained that every week, the CVS sales paper contains deals that only those who subscribe to receive the sales paper, will know about. How do you think that shopper felt? You guessed it, like a VIP.

So, here are a few simple tips on how to serve everyone like a VIP:

Have a sense of urgency for everyone, regardless of their "status".

Tell yourself, "this is the most important person I will serve today".

Remind yourself that every customer has at least one preference. Challenge yourself to identify it, act on it, and share it with your team.

Everyone deserves to receive world-class service. Whether they are in a gas station, hospital, spa, hotel, bank, taxi, or airplane, excellent service is excellent service. Your customers will appreciate your eagerness to serve and reward you with their patronage, their referrals, and their loyalty.

Make your customer feel as though they are royalty, because in the customer service world, they are!

By Brian K. Williams (wording was modified somewhat)

eMagazine for Customer Service Professionals



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Fort Hood Customer Service Office

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fort-Hood-Customer-Service-Office-PAIO-USAG-Fort-Hood/118426444845921>

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What Every Customer Truly Wants - And How You Can Provide It

What we're giving people is details, lots of details. They come in the form of product specifications, a list of attributes, qualities, claims, guarantees, and service promises. These are all great but they don't scratch the itch... they don't satisfy the real craving that each person longs for in their day to day experience.

That constant craving is for meaning.

Think about it. When we are born, we are all basically blank slates -- empty notebooks upon which nothing yet is written.

As we go through life we sense this blankness and we look to fill it in, write on it, doodle, draw, and color all over the pages. In doing so our little book of life begins to take on the thing we want most... meaning.

How does this affect your company, products and branding? This insight provides an opportunity to connect with your customer on a much deeper level -- an emotional one. If understood, you can help them tell their story, strengthen their identity and add purpose to their existence.

Take coffee for example. Busy commuters don't drink the stuff at Starbucks because it's convenient or cheap. They do so because of the affiliation it brings them, the sense of belonging, ritual, purpose, community, etc. In short it provides texture and meaning to what would otherwise be a boring routine... driving to work.

So if that's the case, why do we so often describe and position our products and services in terms of their capabilities, functions and features? Does anyone really want to buy a 6,000 pound piece of metal with

wheels? Or do they want the feeling of freedom that a road hugging convertible delivers?

The strongest connection you can make with your customer is not the tangibles you sell, but the intangibles you instill. Build on that and you will build a loyal and profitable following.

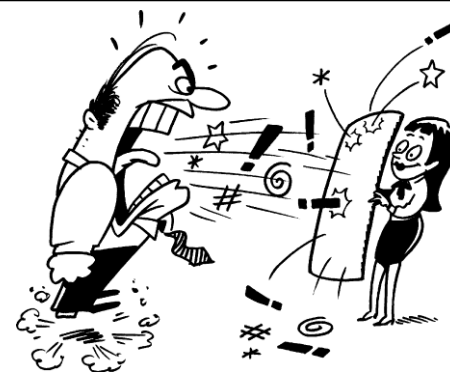
Consider that Rolex is not really in the watch business, but in the prestige business. A quality watch demands a fair price, but the value of prestige is much higher. If a company owns the prestige position, customers will often proudly state how much they paid, not how much they saved.

Why? Because the product added a sense of meaning. If you're continually being price shopped, that's an indication you haven't connected with your customer on an emotional level, and you've been reduced to a commodity.

In thinking about your company's products and services, what purpose, what sense of meaning do you deliver that you are not currently communicating with your customers? Is there some way in which you enrich their lives, improve their experience, give them a greater sense of who they are?

If you can connect to these emotional anchors, you will be building on bedrock. Your brand won't be subject to the constant cost comparisons that so often plague companies that fail to resonate on an emotional, meaningful level.

Phillip Davis is president and founder of Tungsten Marketing, a professional naming and branding company, located near Asheville, North Carolina. When not naming companies, Phil can be found on the hiking trails of the Blue Ridge Mountains. His work can be viewed at <http://PureTungsten.com>



Customers are not always the nicest people in the world.

Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever needed a shield when dealing with customers? Have you even been the recipient of a very angry and agitated customer?

Well, it does not need to be this way. If you are faced with an irate customer who is directing their frustrations directly at you in a personal nature, you do have an out.

Consider the following methods to diffuse the situation:

1. Excuse yourself from the customer and go get your boss or another supervisor.
2. Remain calm and speak to the customer in a low, soft voice. This will cause them to calm down so they can hear you.
3. Let them know that if they want you to assist them, they must become calm and speak to you with dignity and respect.

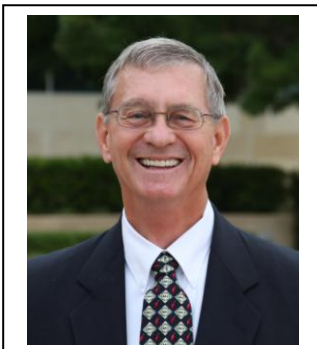
Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are always in the direct path of an irate customer's dissatisfaction; however, the CSR does not need to tolerate disrespect, belittlement or having colorful words hurled at them.

If all else fails, kill them with kindness!

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Employee of the Month



Mr. Bob Easter, PAIO

Bob Easter is a Management Analyst for the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office (PAIO), special staff to the Garrison Commander's Office. One of Bob's primary duties is Program Manager for the Installation Status Report (ISR) Program. In addition, he oversees the Campaign Plan Employee Assessment and serves as the Garrison Historian.

Bob serves many customers both internal and external to the Garrison. He is passionate about his work and truly believes in taking care of his customers.

Bob has given 42 years of his life to Federal service (6 years in the Navy; 16 years in the Army and 20 years as a civilian government employee).

Bob has worked for PAIO for the last eight years (2004) when the office was officially sanctioned under the Installation Management Command.

Bob is married and has one daughter and two grandchildren.

The Team Approach

Many articles and books written on the subject describe how a particular team's game strategy can be applied to business to help team members achieve greater performance and effectiveness.

In team sports, no one exemplified this approach to teamwork better than the Boston Celtics great, Bill Russell. A recent issue of Sports Illustrated called Russell "the greatest team player on the greatest team ever."

The Celtics dynasty, which lasted from 1957 to 1969 and comprised 11 championships in 13 years, stands as a definitive example of how one team can completely dominate a sport.

Bill Russell was the driving force behind his team's success. His goal for the team was to be the best in the world...not next year or the year after, but right then. And his game approach to defense would often paralyze an opponent's offense. He commented, "You don't have to block every shot; you just need to make your opponent think you're going to block every shot!"

It was this attitude about teamwork that exemplified his brilliant career. He felt that an individual can attempt to be their very best, but it's far more satisfying when you can help your team be its very best, which is a much more difficult task. "If I play well, that's one thing. But to make other people play better is great."

To Russell, successful team play involved encouraging each individual to do what he does best. "Remember, each of us has a finite amount of energy, and things that you don't do well take more that

concentration. If you're fatigued by that, then the things you do best are going to be adversely affected."

This same approach to teamwork can be applied to the workplace. Try to ensure that members of your team spend the majority of their time on what they do best. All employees bring to the team a unique set of skills and abilities. Channeling their efforts in these areas will allow them to make their best contribution to the team.

By focusing the efforts of your team in their specific areas of expertise, you not only give your team a winning approach, but also a greater opportunity for success.

Ron Rosenberg teaches people how to get the service they deserve and shows companies how to provide it. In A NutShell. © 2002 QualityTalk.



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